

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 IO-13

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FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9665

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 1773

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SRER, PINT, ET

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE REQUEST FOR POLITICAL ASYLUM: TAYE RETA

REFS: STATE 159189 (NOTAL)

B. ADDIS ABABA 4190(NOTAL)

C. LIBREVILLE 1732 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: TAYE GIVEN STANDARD REFUGEE GUIDANCE. HE DISCUSSED IN SOME DETAIL RELATIONS BETWEEN MENGISTU, DIRG AND POLITBURO AND COMMENTED ON EPMG'S RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS. END SUMMARY.

1. EMBOFFS HAD DETAILED CONVERSATION JULY 9 WITH TAYE RETA, WHO INDICATED HE CONSIDERING SETTLING IN ZAMBIA, LIBERIA OR US. DRAWING FROM STANDARD GUIDANCE, EMBOFFS INFORMED TAYE OF NEED TO CONTACT HOST GOVERNMENT AND UNHCR FOR ASSISTANCE (HE HAS FRIENDS WITH UNHCR) AND EXPLAINED APPLICABLE PROVISIONS OF US IMMIGRATIONACT. TAYE PLANNED DEPART LIBREVILLE JULY 9 FOR NAIROBI. HE ASKED FOR NAME OF CONTACT IN EMBASSY NAIROBI, AND WAS GIVEN NAME OF POL/CON CURTIS KAMMAN, FORMER COWORKER OF CONSULAR OFFICER.

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2. TAYE STATED THAT DURING OAU SUMMIT, MANY HEADS OF STATE AND UNSEC GEN WALDHEIM HAD EXPRESSED CONCERN TO MENGISTU ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN ETHIOPIA AND THAT EXTENT OF CRITICISM HAD NOTICEABLE IMPACT ON MENGISTU.

3. TAYE WAS ASKED ABOUT RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

IN ETHIOPIA, PARTICULARLY RELATIONSHIPS AMONG MENGISUT, POLITBURO AND DIRG. TAYE STATED THAT TENSION EXISTED BETWEEN POLITBURO AND CERTAIN DIRG MEMBERS, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO POLITBURO AGITATION ACTIVITIES. TAYE SAID DIRG MEMBERS ASSIGNED TO PROVINCES HAD COMPLAINED TO MENGISUT ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS ABOUT: (A) USE OF TORTURE AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE BY POLITBURO CADRE IN COUNTRYSIDE, AND (B) POLITBURO AGITATION CAMPAIGNS IN RURAL AREAS WHICH WERE DESTROYING TRANQUILITY OF PRO-GOVERNMENT REGIONS. TAYE ALSO STATED THAT POLITBURO HAD BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR RECENT CAMPAIGN TO DENOUNCE COUNTERREVOLUTIONARIES IN ADDIS ABABA FACTORIES.

4. AS RESULT DIRG COMPLAINTS, TAYE SAID, MENGISUT HAD FELT IT NECESSARY TO WARN POLITBURO ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS ABOUT THEIR POLITICAL EXCESSES, PARTICULARLY IN COUNTRYSIDE. WHILE TAYE INDICATED THAT EXTENT OF CONFLICT BETWEEN MENGISUT AND AHILLE FIDA SOMEWHAT EXAGGERATED BY ADDIS ABABA RUMOR MILL, CONFLICT DID EXIST, AND HE EXPRESSED VIEW THAT MENGISUT WOULD MOVE "VERY SOON" TO BRING POLITBURO UNDER CONTROL. TAYE SAID POLITBURO (PARTICULARLY MAE'SON FACTION) HAD CONSIDERABLE DEGREE OF INFLUENCE AND CONTROL IN COUNTRYSIDE AND IF MENGISUT DID NOT MOVE AGAINST POLITBURO, POSSIBILITY OF COUP ATTEMPT WOULD DEFINITELY INCREASE.

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5. TAYE ALSO COMMENTED ON EVENTS OF FEBRUARY 3 AND MENGISUT PERSONNEL. HE STATED THAT AFTER DECEMBER PMAC REORGANIZATION (WHICH HE REFERRED TO ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS AS "THE PAPER COUP"), TEFERI, MOGUS AND THEIR COLLEAGUES HAD IN FACT INCREASED THEIR POWER AND PRESENTED REAL POTENTIAL THREAT TO MENGISUT. TAYE ALSO SAID MENGISUT WAS PRIMARILY NATIONALIST AND BECAUSE OF HIS BACKGROUND AND TRAINING, IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO BE COMMUNIST.

6. ON EPMG FOREIGN POLICY, TAYE STATED THAT EPMG PLANNING TAKE STEPS TO PREVENT IMPROVEMENT US-SOMALI RELATIONS BUT DID NOT ELABORATE. RE KENYA, TAYE RECOUNTED DISCUSSION AMONG HIMSELF, TWO DIRG MEMBERS AND BERHANU BAYEH. TAYE HAD MADE PITCH FOR MAINTAINING GOOD RELATIONS WITH KENYANS, AND HAD BEEN STRONGLY REBUKED BY TWO DIRG MEMBERS FOR ADVOCATING COOPERATION WITH REACTIONARY NEIGHBOOR. BERHANU BAYEH HAD INTERVENED, STATING THAT GOOD RELATIONS WITH KENYA WERE POLITICAL NECESSITY FOR MOMENT.

7. COMMENT: TAYE PAINTED PICTURE OF BYZANTINE WORKINGS OF PMAC WITH MEMBERS WITHOLDING VITAL INFORMATION TO

INCREASE THEIR POLITICAL POWER, REALPOLITIK OF LOWEST ORDER, AND SITUATION WHERE EXTREME RADICALS HAVE PROGRESSIVELY WON GREATER AND GREATER INFLUCNE FROM MODERATES. END COMMENT.

8. FOR NAIROBI; TAYE, HEAD OF SPECIAL POLITICAL DIVISION IN PMAC CHAIRMANS OFFICE, WELL INFORMED ON EPMG RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBORING STATES AND NO DOUBT CAN PROVIDE USEFUL INSIGHTS INTO ETHIO-KENYAN RELATIONS. STEIGMAN

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